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TRANSPLANTED IOWANS

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Long Beach is often called the western capital of Iowa, as it seems to be the Mecca for many Iowans who want to come here to retire and take life easy. It is told by jokesters that if one goes to the recreation park near the pier in Long Beach, and calls aloud the name of any city in Iowa, he immediately will be surrounded by hundreds from the nearby croquet grounds, the horseshoe pitching stakes, or the "Spit and Argue club" daily meeting on the pier, asking how things are back home. They all have nostalgic memories of their old Hawkeye home, but not strong enough to induce them to move back there.

When Emory English wrote awhile back and asked me to write something for THE ANNALS about former Iowans who had come to southern California and had become prominent here, I consented to do so rather reluctantly, for fear I might overlook some who should be mentioned, as so many hundreds of thousands have migrated here from Iowa—more than from any other state, I understand. I suppose two principal reasons caused them to move—the climate out here, and the climate back there. Changing climate did not seem to lessen the zeal or ambition of many of them, however, as thousands of them have become leaders in various

* Mr. Greene will be remembered in Iowa as editor of the *Chariton Herald*, the *Jefferson Herald*, and earlier with the *Clarinda Herald*. He now writes insurance at 826 South St. Andrews Place, Los Angeles. Iowans have proved good citizens and aggressive leaders in the progress of many western states, but nowhere in greater number than in California, where Mr. Greene finds them giving good account of their Hawkeye training.

lines of business or the professions in California. Of course, I cannot possibly mention all.

As young men, Emory and I were clerks together in the Iowa legislature, away back when—and later we became good friends in the newspaper business and in politics, he from Valley Junction and Des Moines, and I from Clarinda and Chariton, down in the heart of what Lafe Young of the *Des Moines Capital* called “The Q. Reservation,” meaning the southern rows of Iowa counties that were dominated politically by the C. B. & Q. railroad. The chief counsel of the “Q.” was Joseph W. Blythe of Burlington, the head of the railroads’ political machine in Iowa that the Republican progressives defeated under leadership of Albert B. Cummins, he becoming governor of Iowa and later United States senator. It was a great shock to the stand-patters of the Republican party in Iowa when the Cummins group, after several tries, finally jerked the throne out from under Blythe, and the Republican progressives, led by Cummins, Garst, Byers, Funk, and Clarke, dominated the party in the state for many years. I had a newspaper in Chariton, Lucas county, in those times, and I became a “Cummins man,” and helped to pry our county loose from the “Q. Reservation” and enlist it in the up-and-coming Republican progressive movement. Them were the fightin’ days.

As a kid clerk in the legislature I remember one member who later attained high prominence in California. His name was Frank F. Merriam, a newspaper man from Hopkinton, Delaware county. He noticed one day in a committee meeting that I was having difficulty in writing the minutes correctly; so after the meeting he took the time and trouble to show me how to do it, even though he did not know me. It was typical of his kindly nature, and I never forgot the favor.

In Iowa he rose to be Auditor of State, which office at that time included insurance commissioner, building and loan commissioner, and superintendent of banks.

It now takes four men to handle all those jobs. Frank came to California in 1910, and started to work on a newspaper in Long Beach. But soon his political ambitions broke out again and he ran for state assemblyman and was elected in 1916, and later was elected speaker of the assembly, then a state senator, and finally lieutenant governor. Upon the death of Governor Rolph, Frank became governor, and at the election in 1934 was elected again for a four-year term. At this writing in 1948, he is retired, and hale and hearty is living in Long Beach at the ripe age of nearly eighty-three. His close friends from over the state throw a big dinner party for him every year, on his birthday on December 22nd, just to show him that they like him. I mention him first in the list of former Iowans who became prominent out here, because I knew him best, and because he was always such a good friend and an excellent public official.

IOWA'S GREAT EX-PRESIDENT

But, another former Iowan rose higher out here than Frank Merriam, to the highest office in the world, the presidency of the United States, and he is now the only living ex-president. His name is Herbert Hoover, born at West Branch, Iowa, now living in Palo Alto, California. The West Branch folks recently gave him notable recognition by a big celebration there on his seventy-fourth birthday.

It seems to be just dawning on the people of the United States that Herbert Hoover was a great president, in spite of the political propaganda, in which some members of an opposing party tried to pin on him blame for the depression of the early 1930s, even though that depression was world-wide and not confined to this country. In spite of these partisan criticisms of his work as president, Hoover has continued to perform high public service in patriotic way whenever called upon, and has done valuable work in helping to shape European relief under the present Democrat administration. When he appeared before the recent national Republican conven-

tion, he received the greatest ovation and applause of all who spoke there—a long over-due tribute.

Another Iowan out here who reached the top in his profession was Frederick W. Houser, who came here from Center Junction, in Jones county, Iowa, in 1886, when he was fifteen years of age. Los Angeles then had only 40,000 population, about one-fiftieth of its population now. Young Houser studied law here and was admitted to the bar in 1907, and practiced law until he was elected a superior judge, meanwhile serving two terms in the California legislature. He remained on the superior bench until 1923, when he was advanced to the appellate bench in the second district, and in 1937 Governor Merriam appointed him an associate justice of the supreme court of the state, to which position he was re-elected for a twelve-year term in 1939, and served in that capacity until he died a few years ago, after making a fine record as a jurist.

One of Justice Houser's sons, Frederick F., in a way seems to be following in the footsteps of his distinguished father, as he became a lawyer, served three terms in the state legislature, besides a four-year term as lieutenant governor, and in 1946 was elected a superior judge, in which office he is making a splendid record.

Governor Earl Warren's father also came from Iowa, but Earl himself was born in Los Angeles, on the "wrong side of the tracks," which has not hindered him from building his life into great and useful channels, this being America.

A noted educator, Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, president of Leland Stanford university at Palo Alto, was born at Boonesboro, Iowa, April 13, 1875. He obtained a leave of absence in March, 1929, to accept a cabinet portfolio as Secretary of the Interior tendered him by Pres. Herbert Hoover. Also, he was connected with the United States food administration, and in various ways rendered splendid public service.

DISTINGUISHED JURISTS INCLUDED

As a coincidence, a brother, Curtis Dwight Wilbur, the eminent Federal jurist, also born at Boonesboro, Iowa, on May 10, 1867, likewise served in a president's cabinet, being Secretary of the Navy in 1924-1929 in the cabinet of Pres. Calvin Coolidge. Like his brother most of his public career found him a resident of the state of California. He served as an associate justice of the Supreme Court of California, and following his service in the president's cabinet became judge of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. He organized the juvenile court of Los Angeles and drafted several juvenile court laws of California.

Some years ago at least half the judges in Los Angeles county were ex-Iowans, but the percentage at present is small. Superior Judge Edmund Nichols came from Perry, Superior Judge Frank G. Swain from Waterloo, Superior Judge Wm. Hazlett from Pocahontas, and Superior Judges Fred Taft, Frank R. Willis, Ralph H. Clock (now deceased) and C. A. Ballreich (also deceased), all came from Iowa.

Superior Judge Carl Stutsman came from Burlington, and his father and my father-in-law, C. A. Lisle of Clarinda, who also lived in Burlington for some years, were good friends back there.

And Paul Peek, an assistant justice on the appellate bench in central California, came from West Union, Iowa. He was in the California legislature from Long Beach, became speaker of the assembly, and served as secretary of state for awhile before being appointed to the appellate bench, to which he was later elected for a full term.

In other fields than the law many prominent southern Californians also came from Iowa. One of the great scientists of the world is Robert Millikan of the California Institute of Technology, at Pasadena, and he got his first inspiration to specialize in science while attending high school at Maquoketa, Iowa. He, however, was born in Illinois. He later studied at Oberlin college in

Ohio, in Berlin, and at Dresden, and taught at Chicago university for twenty-five years before coming to Pasadena in 1921 to take charge of the Norman Bridge Laboratory at California Tech., where he has become famous among scientists everywhere.

Also distinguished in several fields were Joe and Charles Crail, of Fairfield, Iowa, both now dead. Identical twins, they looked so much alike that a girl with whom both of them "kept company" in Fairfield, did not know for the life of her which twin was calling on her. They came to Los Angeles together in 1913, practiced law together for years, bought real estate together, became rich together, and ran for office, but not together. Charles aspired to the bench, became a superior judge, and later a justice on the appellate bench, and died in 1938. Joe was elected to congress and served for several terms, and died a year before his brother. Both were fine gentlemen and valuable citizens.

Joe Crail, Jr., a son of Charles, helped his father and uncle to start a little building and loan association in Los Angeles in 1935, the Coast Federal Savings & Loan, and Joe, Jr., has built it into the largest in the west, with over \$51,000,000 in assets.

Another Iowan who distinguished himself out here in finance was Joseph F. Sartori, who was born in Cedar Falls, attended Cornell college at Mount Vernon, and practiced law in Lemars. After coming to California he got into banking, and founded a bank which has grown into one of the greatest chains in the country, the Security First National Trust & Savings Bank. He married a girl in Iowa, and she has become a prominent leader in women's club and other civic work here. Sartori died a few years ago. One of his vice presidents, Charles H. Toll, who became a leader in many fields here, also came from Clinton, Iowa. He died a few weeks ago at the age of eighty-nine years.

THE IOWA ASSOCIATION

A prominent attorney in Los Angeles is the present president of the Iowa Association, J. Ray Files, who came from Fort Dodge, and while teaching school there in his younger years lived with Sen. Jonathan P. Dolliver and family. Files heads the immense group of former Iowans in southern California who gather a couple of times a year to picnic and visit together, in Los Angeles or Long Beach. There are usually from 50,000 to 100,000 attending the picnic.

The Iowa Association was founded in 1900 by John J. Spielman of Long Beach, a prominent railway civil engineer, and he was secretary of the association for twenty years. Chas. H. Parsons succeeded him as secretary and skillfully managed the huge picnics and other gatherings of Iowans until his death a few years ago. His wife is now carrying on the work, as well as managing other state organizations of folks who want to meet and reminisce occasionally. But John Spielman is known as the father of the Iowa association.

Another Iowan prominent out here was Henry W. Wright, a former member of the California legislature, speaker of the assembly, Los Angeles county supervisor, chairman of the board of supervisors, and president of the Iowa association. Henry was born in Chickasaw county, near Iona, but lived in O'Brien county much of his life before coming to Los Angeles in 1903. His wife, Blanche Rose of Glenwood, where Henry was a clerk in the state institution when he was a young man, attended Simpson college, in Indianola, when I was a student there. I phoned Henry a short time ago at his home in South Pasadena, where they have lived for thirty-seven years, for an appointment to talk with him about further data for this article, but before the appointment he died suddenly from a heart attack. He was a fine gentleman and a valuable citizen. Only recently THE ANNALS had an interesting article from his pen about his recollections of early farm days in Iowa.

Ed Hopkins, who was county assessor of this big county for many years, came from Iowa, and was prominent in affairs of ex-Iowans, having been president of the Iowa association in 1918. He died some years ago. His son John is at present a deputy district attorney of Los Angeles county.

Harry Hargrave, also a past president of the association and prominent in many activities here, came from near Oskaloosa, in Mahaska county, in 1926. He was on the Los Angeles public utilities commission for years, and is now a member of the county police commission. He is an artist of ability, his paintings adorning many prominent public as well as private walls. One of his paintings of Iowa corn hangs on the Iowa Capitol walls in the executive office of Governor Blue, who is an old friend of Hargrave.

Two prominent Southern Californians from Muscatine county, in Iowa, are Jerry Giesler, a leading attorney in Los Angeles, noted as counsel in many big law suits, who takes a great interest in the Iowa picnics here, three generations of the Giesler family having been prominent in Muscatine county; and Dr. G. Frank McDermont, who came here from Muscatine in 1882 and located in Fullerton, where he became famous as a thoroughbred horse breeder, specializing in show horses. He died in October, 1948, at the age of 71, but even at that age he took part and showed some of his fine horses at the Los Angeles county fair at Pomona in October.

An Iowan most aggressive in public service was John J. Hamilton, who died in November, 1947. Formerly he was editor of the *Des Moines Daily News* and active there in the movement for adoption of the commission plan of city government. Removing to Pasadena in 1911, Hamilton almost immediately renewed his public activities and with unabated vigor served successively as secretary of the charter revision commission, a member on the Pasadena board of education, member of the board of supervisors from the San Gabriel district, and

of the Pasadena city commission; later the executive secretary of the public power league of Los Angeles, which projected the Colorado river improvement and Hoover dam projects; and in 1924 directed Sen. Robert M. LaFollette's presidential campaign in southern California.

NEWSPAPER MEN IN GROUP

Other Iowans prominent here should include Justus Craemer, who with his young partner, Wm. Hart, came from Fort Dodge in 1911 and bought a little paper at Orange, California, not far from Los Angeles. They built it into a big paper, both meanwhile becoming leaders in state affairs, and Justus, after serving in other important state departments, is now a member of the powerful Public Utilities commission, which regulates the railroads and other public utilities of the state. Bill Hart was killed in an aeroplane crash a few years ago, and his wife is still running the *Orange Daily News*, first bought by the two young chaps from Fort Dodge away back in 1911.

Another Iowan who has made good out here in a big way is L. D. Hotchkiss, editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, one of the great papers of the nation. He came from Bloomfield, Iowa. And other former newspaper men in Iowa who came here include Stanley Miller, who edited the *Mount Pleasant Free Press* for years, and is a brother of the late Alex Miller, of the *Washington (Iowa) Democrat*. Stanley now has a printing plant in Los Angeles. And Paul Stillman, formerly editor of the *Jefferson (Iowa) Bee*, and a member of the Iowa legislature and speaker of the house there, also has a printing plant in Glendale. He was a friendly competitor of mine when I owned the *Jefferson Herald* back there. And John Hungerford, Jr., son of the late J. B. Hungerford of the *Carroll (Iowa) Herald*, edited the *Reseda News* for years, but recently sold it.

Still another Iowa newspaper man was John B. Long, formerly of the *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, who came to

Los Angeles twenty years ago to accept the manager-ship of the California Newspaper Publishers' association, in which he has done outstanding work. He is recognized as one of the ablest newspaper association managers in the nation.

In other lines also former Iowans have made good in California. Two of the five county supervisors of Los Angeles county, who manage more business and control more assets than many states of the Union, came from Iowa—Leonard Roach from Clinton on the big river and Wm. A. Smith from Reinbeck, in Grundy county.

Otto Gerth, who came from Forest City, Iowa, is now mayor of Beverly Hills, a wealthy and classy neighbor of Los Angeles. The famous Will Rogers was one of the early mayors of Beverly Hills, so Otto is listed in good company.

And L. M. Hurt, who came from Ames, is now county veterinarian here, and was recently honored by being elected president of the National Veterinarians' association.

Owen Meredith, a big oil man in these parts, came from Des Moines, and is a brother of the late Edwin T. Meredith, former U. S. Secretary of Agriculture, and of farm magazine fame back there.

Rupert Hughes, the noted writer living here, is of the Hughes family from Keokuk, Iowa. His nephew, Howard Hughes, is the famous aeroplane builder here, who irritated the congressional committee on war contracts investigation not long ago. Howard's father, from Keokuk, started the big Hughes' Tool Works, in Houston, Texas, which made the first millions for the family.

Mortimer Wilson was a young man living in Chariton, Iowa, forty or more years ago, who had great ability as a music composer. After completing his musical education he came to Hollywood and won fame there as writer of the musical scores for several noted pictures, among them "The Thief of Bagdad," starring

Doug. Fairbanks, Sr., and later "The Son of Zorro." He also wrote compositions played by some of the great symphony orchestras of the country. In 1920 his New Orleans "Mardi gras" overture won the grand prize of \$500.00 offered by Hugo Riesenfeld for the best American overture. Eighty compositions were entered in the competition, and the decision of the judges was unanimous. Wilson died January 2, 1932.

MINISTERIAL GROUP LIMITED

I do not seem to find many former Iowans who have become noted leaders in church circles out here. Perhaps Iowa needed them worse than we did here, this being closer to heaven.

One minister of the gospel who did make a big name for himself here, however, was the Rev. Robert J. Burdette of Burlington, Iowa, who died some years ago. In Burlington he attained fame as a columnist on the *Burlington Hawkeye*, under Editor J. L. Waite, and also as a lecturer and a poet. After his wife died there, he came to California early in this century, and married a second time, to a lady of considerable wealth. In his younger years Burdette had been a Baptist preacher, and his second wife induced him to return to the pulpit, in a mammoth temple, which she organized the capital to build, at Fifth and Olive streets in the heart of Los Angeles. It is now known as the Philharmonic auditorium, and is still the home of the Temple Baptist church, though the auditorium is used for musical entertainments, light operas, and other high class affairs during the week. Burdette preached there from 1903 to 1909, and built up a huge congregation. He died soon after at their beach home at Cliffton by the sea, south of Redondo beach.

Other noted preachers, among them the Rev. J. Whitcomb Brougher, followed Burdette at Temple Baptist, but he and his wife are responsible for the big church and the beautiful office and auditorium building known

as the Philharmonic, named after the great Philharmonic Orchestra of Los Angeles, and the official home of that organization, as well as of the Temple Baptist church.

Another minister, Hardy Ingham (sounds like Harvey Ingham) came from near Centerville, Iowa, and made a reputation for great ability as a Methodist pastor at Glendale, on the edge of Los Angeles. And Dr. Edwin A. Schell, former president of Iowa Wesleyan university at Mount Pleasant where the national women's sorority P.E.O. was born also came to Glendale and became prominent in church affairs before he died a few years ago.

OTHERS BECAME PROMINENT

In athletic circles, some of our local football coaches who were recognized nationally came from Iowa. Howard Jones, who coached the University of Southern California team to national collegiate championships more than once while he was alive, came from the State University of Iowa, where he coached for a time. And the present coach at up-and-coming Pepperdine college in Los Angeles, Warren Gaer, came from Drake university in Des Moines, where he coached football.

A famous woman worker here, who wielded a wide influence for temperance was Mrs. Eva C. Wheeler, twenty-five years state president of the W.C.T.U., who died in 1947. A few years ago she was married to Charles H. Randall, a former congressman from this section, and the only congressman ever elected on the Prohibition ticket.

A leader in Hollywood whom I remember well was Col. John J. Steadman, who was clerk of the Federal court in Des Moines for many years before coming to southern California early in the century. After I had sold my newspaper in Iowa, the *Chariton Herald*, in 1908, I ran a little weekly in Hollywood, the *Sentinel*, for a few months for the owner on vacation, and Colonel Steadman, who was a civic leader there, tried to get me to buy the paper and stay, but I didn't have sense enough to take his advice. I couldn't see the possibilities, there

being only 5,000 people there at the time, and the main street, Hollywood boulevard, was not even paved. So I went back to Iowa for three discontented years before coming to California to stay, in 1912. Perhaps I missed a fortune by going back, as another young fellow, Harlan G. Palmer, bought the other little weekly in Hollywood, the *Citizen*, and it has grown into a big daily and a million dollar property, as the town developed around it.

I hope I have not missed too many whom I should mention in this article. Among so many former Iowans I am bound not to have found or thought of all who became successful and prominent. I never attained fame myself, though I did get into the state legislature for a couple of terms, which cured my political ambitions. All the fame I claim is for raising three fine children. I am at least famous in my own family, which is a pretty big world after all. I don't blame the folks from Iowa or any other state who don't want to live anywhere else than in southern California. I don't myself.

THE NAME "OTTUMWA"

"Ottumwa" is a corruption of the Fox Indian word "Autumya-noc" or "Ottumwa-Noc." There are three disputed interpretations as to its meaning. Josiah Smart, who was an Indian interpreter for General Street (at Agency), stated it means "Place (Noc) of Swift water." Uriah Biggs of the Appanoose Rapids Company stated "Ottumwanoc" means "Place of Perseverance or Self-will," and claimed the Indians themselves told him that. The third interpretation, also traceable to one who understood the language, is "Place of Hermits."

This derives from the fact that Chief Appanoose moved his people from the Sac and Fox Nation villages on the Iowa, Cedar, Skunk and eastern streams, to the village at the rapids, which for years were called Appanoose Rapids. Of the three, historians generally give greatest credence to Smart's translation, "Place of Swift Water."
—*Ottumwa Courier*, August 7, 1948.

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